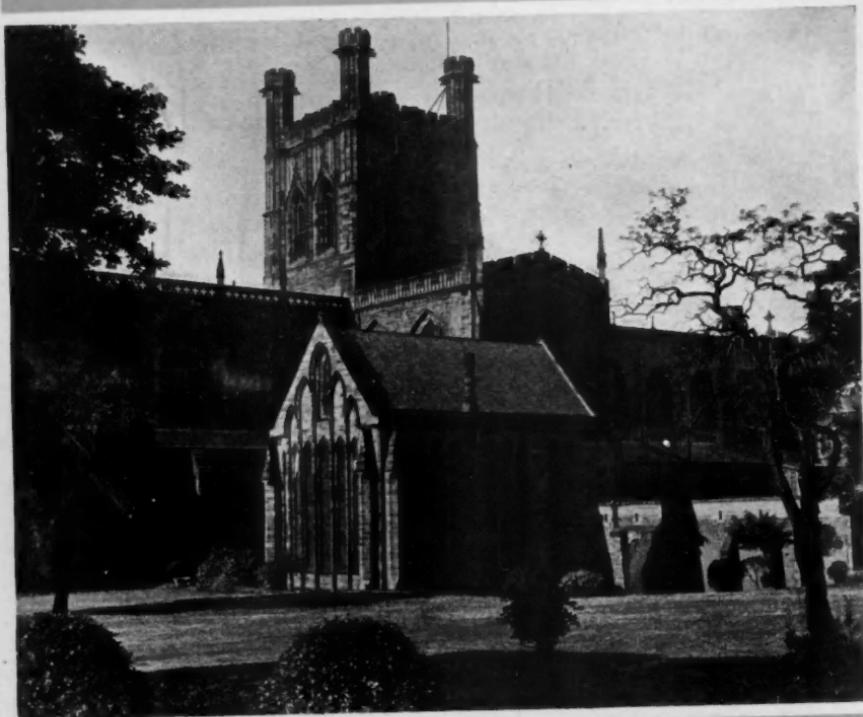


# COMMON GROUND



JULY—AUGUST, 1953

VOLUME VII NUMBER 4

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PATRON — HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

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**Cover Photograph—Chester Cathedral.**

*The first pianoforte recital by Miss Harriet Cohen, C.B.E., on behalf of the Council of Christians and Jews, was given in this beautiful Cathedral on July 13th. This issue of "Common Ground" also tells the story of the first ten years of the Chester branch of the Council.*

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*Signed articles express the views of the contributors which are not necessarily those of the Council of Christians and Jews.*

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## The Eclipse of God

T. S. GREGORY

*Mr. T. S. Gregory reviews Dr. Martin Buber's Studies in the Relation between Religion and Philosophy\*. Mr. Gregory is an author and journalist, and is on the staff of the B.B.C. Third Programme.*

SOME time ago, I went to a West End hotel to see Martin Buber whom I had never seen, to ask a favour of him. The hotel was opulent and subdued. It seemed a perfect hotel where no one need encounter any one—as efficient and as Gentile as Gentile can be. So I waited. Then suddenly he appeared, unmistakable, an Israelite indeed, an Hebrew of Hebrews. This face recurred to my memory when I read in this collection of lectures as follows :

“ The prophets of Israel have never announced a God upon whom their hearers' striving for security reckoned. They have always aimed to shatter all security and to proclaim in the opened abyss of the final insecurity the unwished-for God who demands that his human creatures become real, they become human, and confounds all who imagine that they can take refuge in the certainty that the temple of God is in their midst . . . The primal reality of these prophecies does not allow itself to be tossed into the attic of ‘religions’: it is living and actual in this historical hour as ever.”

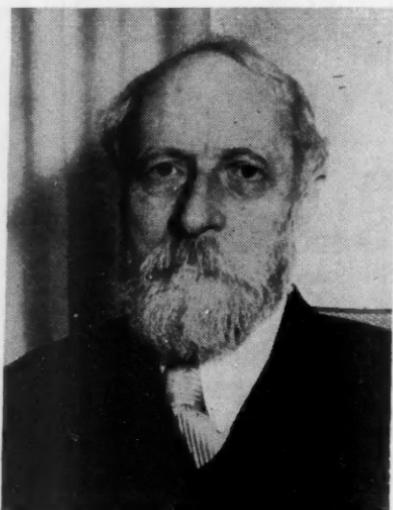
It is by the words of this burthen, this word of the Lord, that the security-ridden, self-insuring mind of the West may learn to be real again. And it was the capacity to hear and proclaim this kind of message that constituted the Jew :—Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians and

\*“ *The Eclipse of God*,” by Martin Buber. Published by Victor Gollancz Ltd., price 15s.

how I bear you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me from among all the peoples, for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation.

#### Two attitudes of mind

These lectures, delivered mostly at universities in America, are concerned, like all of Buber's writing, with the contrast and relation between two attitudes of mind. In the modern world he finds an "eclipse of the light of heaven, eclipse of God." This, he says is, "the character of the historic hour through which the world is passing." "He who refuses to submit himself to the effective reality of the transcendence as such . . . contributes to the human responsibility for the eclipse." These two attitudes he defines in two dualities. "The duality of I and Thou finds its fulfilment in the religious relationship: the duality of subject and object sustains philosophy." This does not mean—far from it—that there is no valid philosophy. Buber is not even tempted to revolt as were Kierkegaard and the earlier Barth against the consciousness which strives to become autonomous. Without such autonomy there can be no true I-Thou relation. But it does mean that you cannot mistake philosophy for religion or have a valid philosophy which does not, like Plato's, seek religion. The "domain of abstract thinking" is not self-sufficient. This would be Buber's answer both to modern interpreters of Spinoza who stress the "*intellectualis*" by forgetting the "*amor*" and to certain types of rationalism that are quick to accuse personal religion of being "*anthropomorphic*." "The highest concept of God would have remained confined to the sphere of discursive thinking if Spinoza had not introduced into his doctrine an element which . . . puts him in actual relation with the real, namely, love." "Thus God loves . . . and since His



love becomes manifest in our love of Him, the divine love must be of the same essence as human love. In this way the most extreme anti-anthropomorphism evolves into a sublime anthropomorphism."

#### A false philosophy answered

An example of the false philosophy which conceives man as "encapsulated in his own subjectivity" is the "atheistic existentialism" which Sartre "represents,"—false not in its silence concerning God but in its ingenious endeavour to regard God as dead. "God" says Sartre, "is the quintessence of the Other . . . What need have we of God? The Other is enough, no matter what other" For this "other" exists solely to stare at me and make me an object, which I want to be. This, we might imagine to be a dramatic and even a neurotic approach to religion, where the dramatist seeks only situations and *dramatis personae*. Buber answers, "What if God is not the quintessence of the Other, but rather its absoluteness? And what if it is not primarily the reciprocal relation of subject and object which exists between me and the other, but rather the reciprocal relation of I and Thou?" God is not dead. "Divine truth, according to a saying of Franz Rosenzweig, wishes to be implored 'with both hands' that of philosophy and that of theology. 'He who prays with the double prayer of the believer and the unbeliever, to him it will not deny itself'."

The distinction between these two dualities of I-and-Thou and Subject-Object suggests a commentary on present English philosophy which, however, Buber does not notice. The I-Thou duality, he says, "arises out of the original situation of the individual, his living before the face of Being, turned toward him as he is turned toward it." The Subject-Object relation "springs from the splitting apart of this togetherness into two entirely distinct modes of existence, one which is able to do nothing but observe and reflect and one which is able to do nothing but be observed and reflected upon." One aspect of the movement in English thinking is its attack on this subject-object dualism with its "ghost in the machine," and one of its consequences the repudiation of much that had passed for religious thinking. The critics often assumed or accepted the label of "atheists." They did, in fact, go far to recover what Buber calls "living in the face of Being" (even if they spelt it with a small 'b'), and were concerned with the real encounter which arises out of "the original situation of the individual." They distrust the "splitting apart of this togetherness into two entirely distinct modes of existence," and they have discredited the kind of verbal facility which, dividing mind from matter, gave the mind a splendid licence to create its universes *a priori*. Moreover,

as Buber says, "the realer religion is, so much the more it means its own overcoming. It wills to cease to be the special domain, 'Religion,' and wills to become life. It is concerned in the end not with specific religious acts, but with redemption from all that is specific. Historically and biographically, it strives towards the pure Everyday. Religion is, in the religious view, the exile of man: his homeland is unarbitrary life." We can imagine the reaction to this doctrine, of some Christian theologians and historians and of their more zealous opponents in the age of romance. We can also mark the likeness between this view of religion and contemporary views of science. "There is no scientific method" said a young practitioner, "there is only the best way of finding out what you want to know." Though this be something less than the whole story, here also is the search for the unarbitrary, the Everyday, the redemption from all that is specific. In fact, "the unwished for God demands that his human creatures become real." Amos is still our contemporary.

### **Breakdown of spiritual monopolies**

It is no accident that this "historic hour" should see so many assaults upon so many forms of idealistic dualism, and the break-down of intellectual and spiritual monopolies. The movement towards "lived concreteness" and "the unreduced immediacy of the moment" which Buber calls "the meeting place of the human and the divine" is intense and world-wide. Logic, science, politics, religion simultaneously drive in the same direction. "Only he reaches the meaning, who stands firm without holding back or reservation before the whole might of reality and answers it in a living way." But no one can read the prophets without feeling for the well-furnished and prosperous idolaters who failed to hear or so easily forgot the word of the Lord. Men do not like to be transcended. In Britain and America, genial mediocrity and a wide tolerance have established a convention of half-consciousness such as in the year that King Uzziah died, Isaiah beheld in his own people, and the prophet himself may well be afraid. The real God as Buber says, is to begin with dreadful and incomprehensible. Even to call Him God is profanation. "He who begins with the love of God, without having previously experienced the fear of God, loves an idol which he himself has made, a god whom it is easy to love." The apocalypse has its eclipse, "the opened abyss of final insecurity." For those who have been secure and at ease in Zion that is incomprehensible. To affirm the presence of the incomprehensible still seems an intellectual treachery or at best a lack of faith in the sole instrument man possesses for discerning or telling truth. It is by no means easy to accept the fact that even if the temple of God is in our

midst, there is no taking refuge in it, but rather the reverse. When the Christian has proclaimed the Christ, his instinct is to deny that the Christ can be crucified. Nevertheless the denial earns a terrible rebuke. We catch sometimes in the present world the terrifying irony of the prophet: The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple: and the messenger of the covenant whom ye delight in, behold he cometh, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? Yet it is this emphasis above all that our time requires and seems likely to receive. Certainly not what is usually known as common sense or good will can match us with this hour. The message that in their long-practised ability to devise policies and master situations the Gentiles may gratefully accept from the servant of Jehovah is quite different: Beware lest thou forget the Lord thy God in not keeping His commandments . . . and say in thine heart, My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.

#### The court of conscience

In this volume we pass from the metaphysical to the ethical meaning of the I-Thou relation in a study of Jung and especially of Jung's doctrine of evil. The psychologist's end is the wholeness of man and his art that of reconciliation. For him, therefore, evil is the unreconciled, and his method is to accept it or "succumb to it in part." He seeks to integrate the soul in the Self. This, says Buber, "dispenses with the conscience as the court which distinguishes and decides between right and wrong." Such integration belongs, indeed, to the subject-object order of things, in which the soul is only a phenomenon. But it is not the wholeness, it is the vocation of man that matters. "I hold that each man in some measure has been called to something." "The voice of conscience compares that which he is with that which he was called to become." This comparison itself explains the fact Jung has emphatically repeated that in practice he finds religious faith necessary to mental healing of patients of mature age. For it is vocation, not integration, that not only marks failure but in that act creates hope. Vocation not integration makes or remakes man human. The fact that a self is whole, it may share with anything, cat or dog, pebble or bacillus: anything is whole that satisfies definition; but that I have been called to be I means not only that Some One called me, but that I can succeed or fail in my vocation, can answer or ignore it. In that covenant of law, promise, grace, that I-Thou relation, the personal pronoun attains its personal status.

Perhaps, then, in *Common Ground*, a Christian reader of Martin Buber may be allowed once more to mark how close is the community of Jewish and Christian faith. For I and Thou are the terms of this

"unarbitrary life" and whether the Ineffable reveal or conceal himself, the I-Thou relation is realised in the "unreduced immediacy of the moment." Hence if one shall say:

I know that Messiah cometh: when he is come, he *will* declare unto us all things,  
the answer in eclipse or glory will be the answer given to Moses when he asked the name of God:

I that speak unto thee, I AM.

There is nothing real that is not the gift of the living God and as Buber says, "the religious relationship, no matter what different form it takes, is in its essence nothing other than the unfolding of the existence that is lent to us."

## For Leo Baeck on his Eightieth Birthday

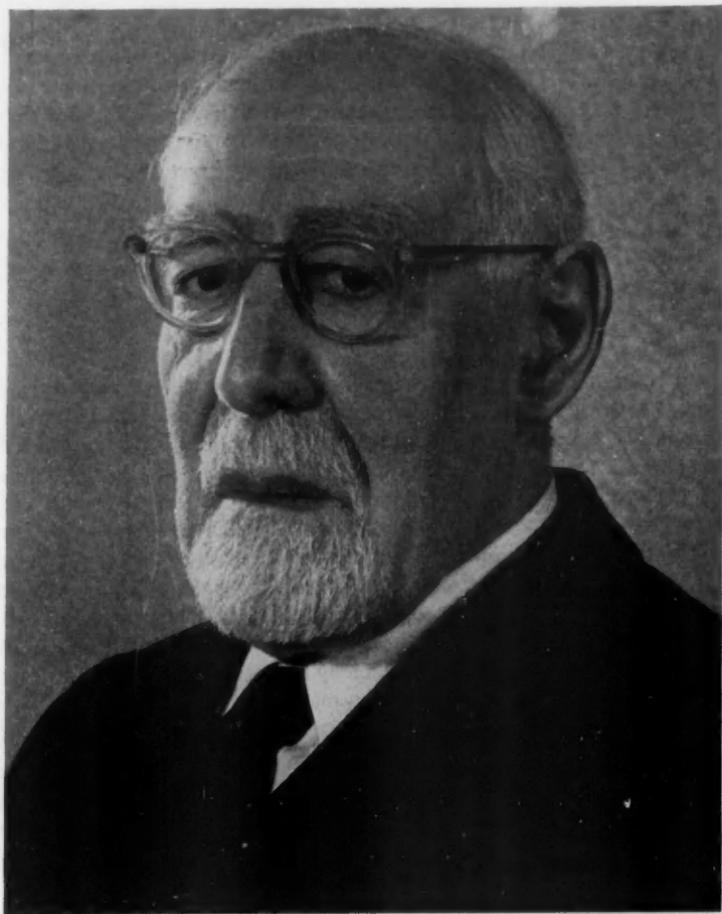
HERMANN MAAS

Rabbi Dr. Leo Baeck, author of "*The Essence of Judaism*" and many other works, celebrated his 80th birthday on May 23rd. Dr. Baeck, a former Rabbi of Berlin, was an outstanding spiritual leader of the Jews of Germany throughout the Nazi persecution. Refusing to seek refuge for himself, he strove ceaselessly for the release of others, and remained to share in the sufferings of the concentration camp. Since his release at the end of the war, Dr. Baeck has made his home in this country, and is now a British citizen. "*Common Ground*" is glad to be able to print this tribute by Dr. Hermann Maas of Heidelberg, a German Lutheran Pastor, who himself was active in helping the victims of Nazi antisemitism.

TO WRITE a tribute to Dr. Leo Baeck, on the occasion of his 80th birthday, is no easy task. His venerable age, his eminence as a theologian, his spiritual and saintly personality, set him apart from the ordinary run of men. At the same time he captivates by his unassuming, indeed mild, manner of speech. He is, in fact, a man of intrinsic gentleness, whose very gentleness has made him great, as those know best who saw him stand erect amidst the deepening shadows and gathering stormclouds, finding inner calm in his quiet confidence in God.

The great wealth of his writings shows not only how deeply and fruitfully Leo Baeck has all his life thought about Judaism, but also how tenaciously he has wrestled with the great facts and problems of Christianity. He is a past master in his wide subject with its immense literature, Jewish as well as Greek, Hellenistic and Christian alike, covering no less than three millenia.

On Judaism Dr. Leo Baeck speaks with the profound conviction of a Jewish divine and with a deep-rooted power drawn from the writings which express the very soul of his own people. A Rabbi is usually the



*Photo: Jane Brown.*

**RABBI DR. LEO BAECK**

leader of a minority, the comforter of people living in tribulation and often danger of life. His is a task beset with troubles and torments, which can so easily provoke an agitated, aggressive, and arrogant tone. Not so for Leo Baeck. His discipline flows from Holy Scriptures, which are for him the fountain-head of all wisdom and knowledge, of all true piety and conduct. This is the key in which he speaks of *The Essence of Judaism*, of the

*Ways of Judaism*, of the calling of God's people, the Servant of the Lord, the Son of Man, of Messianic expectancy, and of Jewish prophecy and preaching. Thus he opens up ways to the Old and New Testaments, to Midrash and Talmud; and on through the Middle Ages right into the present with all its groping after God. Faith is for him a certainty "towards God;" towards the eternal meaning; the heart of all things.

Each one of his books is like a sheaf of corn, ripened in storm and in sunshine, in sorrow and in joy, in the glowing heat of a life of toil and in contemplation. They contain seed for the soil of his own people, for that of Christianity and of the age in which we live.

### **Student of Christianity**

It is small wonder, perhaps, that Leo Baeck has always been deeply engaged in the study of Christianity. Following a moving characterisation of Jesus, he once said: "Jewish history and Jewish thought must never pass him by, never ignore him. Never since he lived his earthly existence has there been a time without him, a time which would not merge into the epoch of which he is the beginning." For Leo Baeck the Gospels are Jewish not merely because they contain sentences which may be found in an identical or similar phrasing in the Jewish tradition, but also because Jewish faith and hope, Jewish sorrow and Jewish expectancy sing through their pages. The extent and depth to which Baeck has penetrated not only the Gospels, but also Protestant theology in all its age-long and intricate developments, are truly amazing. This may be clearly seen in his essay on *Theology and History*, in which he forecasts and describes the coming of a new theology, the dialectic theology after the epoch of historicism.

Nor does he fail to diagnose the changes leading to the breaking away of the early church from its origins, the Jewish people; a division which, as he puts it, caused what had been something new *in Israel* to turn into something new *against Israel*.

The mystery of these developments is for Leo Baeck something infinitely painful. Changes that might otherwise be explained merely as philological modifications, a revaluation of terms and concepts, have for him the power of dramatic events leading up to tragic results, to the loss of substance, the rupture in the dialogue between Israel and Christianity, and, what is worse, to the loss of a brother.

### **Call to the Church**

If in our own day the tragedy wrought by the failure of mutual understanding reached its terrible climax in unilateral excesses of hatred,

contempt and shameful outrage, sparing not even Leo Baeck himself, but inflicting on him most grievous wounds, his 80th birthday should sound a rousing call to the Christian Church. It should be remembered as a great day not only in the annals of Jewry, but also as a day on which the Church paid thanks to him and pledged herself to seek a new attitude towards Israel; a day reminding the world of that which is holy, and of a man who throughout his life has been a servant of holy things.

"Saints are people who make the divine light shine out through their own lives and those of others, who in their very being show that God lives. They will shine through the ages." With these words of another great man of these apocalyptic times, Nathan Soederblom, I would salute Leo Baeck in gratitude and reverence.

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*Shortly after Dr. Baeck's birthday, and at the invitation of the Council of Christians and Jews, a distinguished company of Christian and Jewish scholars met in London to greet him and to wish him well. The following paragraphs, which afford such a striking illustration of what is perhaps the main thesis of Dr. Maas's article, are quoted from Dr. Baeck's reply on that occasion to a speech of congratulation by the Dean of St. Paul's, the Very Rev. Dr. W. R. Matthews. We may well ponder the relevance and the profundity of their message.*

Judaism means a question, a permanent one, posed to Christianity, and Christianity a permanent question propounded to Judaism. The two are their mutual problem. Neither is really enabled to vindicate itself without giving attention to the other. For a very long time, however, the history of Christian-Jewish and Jewish-Christian relations was only a painful drama. When one spoke to the other it was across a deep gulf.

Now new days are dawning, and a new idea will appear here. On our days, it seems, is laid the solemn obligation that Jewish and Christian faiths frankly meet—faiths indeed, and not only tendencies and policies. They are called to face one another on the strength of being alive to a common ground, and a common outlook also, and, so to speak, to a common teacher too.

This is the import of the true teacher, that he becomes the connecting link between the different pupils and their different ways. It may be difficult to define here this common teacher, but one should be sensitive to him wherever is manifested "the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." This spirit, this common teacher, is the uniting power in history.

## **Religion and the Social Order**

I. I. MATTUCK

*The final lectures in the series "Religion as a Civilising Force in History," arranged by the London Society of Jews and Christians, were given by Rabbi Dr. I. I. Mattuck and Rev. Dr. James Parkes. Both dealt with the situation in the modern world. Dr. Mattuck is Minister Emeritus of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue.*

**W**HAT is meant by "civilisation" in this context? It obviously does not mean technological advance, highly developed machinery and other mechanical devices for the business of living: religion can contribute nothing to that. Nor does it mean scientific knowledge. Though it is sometimes claimed that religion has given the impulse, and even the method, to the development of modern science, it cannot be claimed that today science depends in any way on religion for its development. Art and literature may be related to religion but they also are not dependent on it.

But there is one aspect of civilisation which is directly and inevitably related to religion—the moral and ethical attainment in the lives of individual nations and humanity. Civilisation is distinguished from savagery or barbarism by its higher moral standards.

It is the first problem of civilisation in our time to maintain the highest moral standards to which the human race has attained. Deterioration in them has coincided with the growth of irreligion. And the worst conditions exist in countries which officially reject religion and are ruled by men who are hostile to it, following the antagonistic philosophy of materialism. It would be unrealistic to say that only they show the deterioration in moral standards resulting from irreligion. It has also occurred in some degree in other countries.

### **Respect for the individual**

Respect for the individual and his rights has been chief among the spiritual and moral attainments of our civilisation. It was implicit in the Judaeo-Christian tradition of the Western world and it was made explicit in the development of Western civilisation. That principle can have a firm ground only in a religious philosophy.

Totalitarianism not only does not respect the rights of individuals but it does not recognise that, individually, men have any rights, even the right to exist. That attitude to the individual is an inevitable corollary of irreligion because respect for the individual is a corollary of religion. A man is entitled to rights for the same reason that he has responsibilities: because he is a spiritual being, a person. The affirmation that man is a spiritual being has its roots in religion, which is a philosophy of the universe centred in the belief in the ultimate reality of spirit.

Religions have not always shown the respect for persons which religion itself requires. But the barbarities perpetrated against individuals by totalitarian governments differ in several ways from the cruel treatment which religions have sometimes in the past imposed on individuals. The sham trials in the totalitarian countries violate civilisation by the cynical pretence of administering justice. But they have an even more diabolic aspect. The sham confessions show that the souls of the victims have been killed before their bodies are brought to their pre-arranged doom. The method is unknown, but the fact is tragically clear. It is the vilest attack on civilisation. It shows that those guilty of it lack any appreciation of men as spiritual beings.

### **Liberty of the mind**

It is an urgent problem of our time to strengthen the religious foundations of human life. Religion must fulfil two conditions to solve the present problem of civilisation and to direct its advance. The first condition is the obvious one that it must itself, in its organisations and institutions, show respect for the individual, which includes respect for the liberties of the mind; and it must use all its influence to promote that respect generally. The dangers to the liberties of the mind which exist in the Western countries result from the eclipse of liberalism—liberalism not as a particular form of religion or politics but as a philosophy that puts a high value on the freedom and rights of the individual.

Liberalism involves the obligation to think, with a due sense of responsibility. It has lost its strength through men's mistrust of themselves. It was not destroyed by totalitarianism, but totalitarianism used the spiritual vacuum caused by the loss of spiritual self-respect in men. Liberalism means not only respect for others but respect for oneself. Both issue from the same root, the religious estimate of men. When men lose their religion, they lose their ground for self-valuation.

### **The racial challenge**

By its insistence on the inherent dignity of men, religion gives guidance for the approach to the racial problem which increasingly challenges our civilisation. It lays perhaps too great a task on religion to ask from it a detailed solution of this problem; it is much too complicated for that. But religion must demand that the search for a solution be guided by the principle of respect for men as men, without any discrimination. The solution must take account of differences in civilisation but not in a way which will imply superiority and inferiority of human status and human rights.

The second condition for the present influence of religion on civilisation is that it must be the kind of religion which uses all its power to promote and enforce on the socio-economic system the recognition and appreciation of the dignity of persons. Not so long ago this involved acute political controversy. It still is controversial, but to a much less degree. In any case, it is an intrinsic duty of religion to promote a better social order. That duty is emphasised now by the challenge of the forces which violate the basis of civilisation. They have drawn their strength from a meretricious idealism. A materialistic social ideology has set itself up as the protagonist of the weaker members of society, as the defender of the economic under-dog. It has won adherents by promises of a better social order which has, in fact, proved to be inhuman and uncivilised. To create a better order of society is one of the problems which confront civilisation. Only religion can solve it properly, because a social order, to be just, must show respect for individuals. That is what social justice means—a social order that recognises the human rights of individuals and assures those rights to the members of society who lack in themselves the capacity to maintain a rightful human position. The human situation as it has now developed not only calls for attention to the social task but lays it down as a condition for religion's influence on the maintenance of civilisation and its advancement.

#### **Religious standards needed**

These two conditions imply that the professed adherents of religions must themselves realise their religious responsibility. It is to judge everything by spiritual and moral standards. The chief instruction for human life given by the Hebrew Prophets was that it must be directed by the realisation of spiritual and moral ideals in obedience to divine law. There is a tendency among religious people to value religion for what they get or may get out of it. Every religion offers its adherents a way of salvation, that is a transcendent life which transfigures the burdens, tribulations and inevitable frustrations of this life into means of spiritual enrichment. But it also means a higher conception of duty. It imposes a law to be followed as the way of life. That law puts spiritual and moral values in the first place. It makes physical and material pursuits subject to them.

Another problem which now confronts civilisation is the problem of how to eliminate war. It has a terrible urgency. The solution lies in an internationalism which recognises the value of nationality, but overcomes the evil in nationalism.

## Dangers of nationalism

Nationalism is a variable phenomenon to be valued differently in its variations. There were the nationalisms of the nineteenth century in which oppressed nationalities expressed their striving for a national existence free to maintain its political and cultural distinctiveness. But there is another kind of nationalism, the kind that is at bottom a form of materialism. It seeks power, wealth or prestige. It stands in the way of an internationalism which will eliminate war. The gravest source of danger lies where religion itself is oppressed and reduced to impotence, or limited, at best, to giving consolation to individuals, without any power to influence indirectly through them or in any direct way the lives of these nations.

There is, however, a task for civilisation which it can perform in the countries where it has freedom to exercise its influence. That task entails the support of all practical policies which gives a reasonable prospect of discouraging aggression. At the same time, it must promote the spirit of internationalism. That does not exclude the good in nationality, but it avoids the evil in nationalism. Efforts to promote internationalism have been blocked by appeal to the old dogma that national sovereignty is sacrosanct. Religion has a higher dogma; it is that God wants the nations to live together in peace under the rule of righteousness. This higher aim cannot be attained, or served, without some sacrifice of national sovereignty. To promote that higher aim and the sacrifices it entails is a service which religion can perform for civilisation by its influence in the countries where it has freedom.

To promote respect for the rights of individuals, to develop a more just social order, and to foster peace among nations—these are the present problems of civilisation. They point to the urgent need for the right kind of religion, because they can be solved fundamentally only by a philosophy of human life which recognises the reality of spirit in the universe and the paramountcy of spiritual values in human life.

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## Religion and Responsibility

JAMES PARKES

*The Rev. Dr. James Parkes, author of many works on Judaism and Christianity, concludes the series of lectures on "Religion as a Civilising Force in History." The earlier addresses are printed in the last two issues of "Common Ground."*

**I**N considering the modern world, we have to look at three different groups of Christian churches. The first is Rome, which under an overall umbrella of unity contains many varieties of interest and emphasis. Secondly, there are the Eastern churches. Thirdly, the Anglican and Protestant churches, with their wide variety of beliefs, of interests and of influences. What is true of religion expressed in the churches is equally true of civilisation expressed in the contemporary societies. We have to look at the relationship of religion to every variety of society, from very free democratic republics to very totalitarian monarchies or dictatorships.

I want to look for a common factor, for something which can help us to get some order into our picture. There is such a common factor and it is to be found in the immense increase of responsibility laid on the ordinary man during the modern period. There were many hardships in mediaeval life. There are many hardships in the primitive societies which still exist today. When we think in terms of the world's civilisations, both Eastern and Western, the one common factor is the increase in the burden of responsibility.

### Modern problems

First, there is the burden of political responsibility. Its weight explains the ease with which the societies which had begun to be democratic gave in to totalitarianism. The ordinary citizen today is vitally affected by events at the other end of the world, with which he is politically linked. I am not speaking of "acts of God" or of nature, but of events over which he can be supposed to have some influence.

Secondly, there is the problem of the intellectual world. The number of people who were condemned for heresy in the Middle Ages was extremely small. Ninety-nine per cent of the people, whether in Church or in the Synagogue, found it possible to accept the intellectual view of the world and of their place in it which was presented by those in spiritual authority over them. Today, there is no overriding intellectual interpretation of the world which we can all accept. We have to be responsible for our own views.

Lastly, there is the problem of inter-dependence. We have built up so complex a social and economic order that hardly any of us can in any

way be self-supporting. If we fall out of our particular niche in the vast complex of society, the community has to help us to get the barest necessities of life. We are no longer able to do that for ourselves.

That is the common factor of the modern world, of East and West alike. It will continue to be the common factor in any ascertainable future and will become a central factor even in those societies still living a less complex existence.

### The Churches challenged

We are bound, therefore, to view the churches as civilising forces in the modern world in terms of their capacity to help and to sustain men and women in meeting this vast burden of responsibility. With all the achievements which can be put to their credit, we have to recognise that, basically, the churches have not met this new situation. Take, for example, the position in our own country. Anyone who approaches the matter historically will recognise with gratitude the part which the Christian tradition has played in the building up of the Welfare State. They will see the strong Free Church influence in the formation of the Labour Party. They will point to the men in the Anglican Church who helped to build up a Christian social conscience. Nevertheless, all the welfare states in the world will not protect their citizens from an atom bomb. You can show Christian influence within the society, but not shaping the society; within a policy but not shaping the policy.

If God is, as religion claims, the ultimate truth, if the knowledge of God is the primary duty of man, then you will have to admit that religion has failed as a civilising force, because it has not brought us nearer to a goal which has been divinely willed. Why is that so?

If there are central factors in this situation, I think they lie in two fields. In the first place religion is, inevitably and in the best sense, conservative. It must transmit to each generation the spiritual experience and knowledge of innumerable generations of predecessors. But I believe it is true of all the churches that they have not yet adequately realised the extent to which the world in which they live has moved away from the whole set of categories in which their theology was built up and a great deal of its experience recorded.

### Guiding men as citizens

What I am going to say in the second place does not contradict the philosophical approach of Dr. Mattuck. Yet I would say that man has ceased to be merely a person to be approached along personal lines.

From what I said of man's inability, in his individual capacity, to control his own destiny, it seems clear that, until the churches can speak directly to man as citizen, as seeker, in a world which never stands still, they cannot hope to regain influence as a civilising factor, no matter what emergency work they may perform in rescuing the victims of a situation they have failed to control. The churches must accept the fact that God wants war to cease, and they are the only instruments by which this can be effected. God wants men to interpret to the full, and use to the full, all the wonders of the creation He has caused to evolve with such infinite ingenuity and delight, but unless there is, side by side with that exploitation, a sense of moral responsibility and purpose, the world will be far from using in any way that could be called divinely willed the powers that have been given for our use.

The churches can never cease to be concerned with men as persons, but until they take as seriously the understanding of the vast responsibilities which come upon their people as citizens and as seekers, I do not believe they can recover their influence. There is incumbent on our generation a task which we cannot fulfil simply by taking over what has been handed down to us. It is to help modern man to gain control of this world in which he is set, and, by gaining control, to turn it to the purposes for which he believes God has designed it.

## The Undergraduate and Human Understanding

A. I. POLACK

### The Challenge of the Universities

"I AM sure the meeting has started us thinking and I hope it may further the co-operation between the religious societies." Here is an extract from a typical letter written by the secretary of a college society—in this case the Student Christian Movement—after an inter-denominational meeting arranged by the Council of Christians and Jews. But this is the end of the story and we must start at the beginning. How are these meetings organised and what is their object? Surely, it may be said, university students know all about "human understanding" already; or, alternatively, isn't the life of an undergraduate so overcrowded that he hasn't time to interest himself in such a nebulous and unscientific subject? It hasn't even got a Faculty at the university.

These arguments are not without force. Yet it was felt that in framing its educational policy the Council had a contribution to make, even in

university circles, to the understanding of the problem of human intolerance, and practical suggestions to offer about techniques in the promotion of understanding between the different human groups. Not long ago at a conference of social workers one of the delegates from a town in the North of England was asked what the relations were like there between the Christian and Jewish communities. "Oh, excellent," he replied; "they never meet!"

The approach to the universities has always been through the numerous denominational and other societies concerned with social welfare which already play an important part in undergraduate life. It was not quite true to say that "they never met," for the S.C.M. has on occasion done noble work in bringing at least some of them together. But it is a fact that until the Council came into the field the Catholic and Jewish Societies were more or less unaware of each other's existence and neither co-operated in the joint activities occasionally organised by the Student Christian Movement.

### Societies co-operate

This in many ways seemed a pity. It was natural and proper that each society, allied to a different denomination, should pursue its special course of activity and study; but in the sphere of human relations and social welfare did they not all share the same concern and could not they co-operate once and again for purposes of inter-group study, and in pursuit of their common ideals? There was also the desirability of free social intercourse between those of different religious outlook though the situation was never that of a famous Public School where a housemaster told his boys that they were not to be seen talking to "the cads in the other houses!"

It would be an exaggeration to claim *nous avons changé tout cela*. What representatives of the Council did find when, at the various universities, they invited the secretaries of the societies to meet and discuss the question over a cup of tea, was that there was a great willingness to try out the experiment of an occasional inter-denominational meeting. They agreed also to exchange their programmes at the beginning of each term and in some cases where a society holds a meeting of general interest they now make a practice of inviting the other societies to join them.

### Joint meetings

As a result of these initial efforts a number of inter-denominational meetings are regularly held at Oxford and Cambridge and at most of the

provincial universities under the auspices of the Council of Christians and Jews. The subjects discussed are exceedingly varied, ranging from the Problem of Religious Intolerance to the Crisis of East-West Relations. As a rule there are three speakers on the platform, representative of the three main religious communities, but quite often a representative of the coloured groups is invited to join them. Discussion is, as one would expect at a university, of a high standard; sometimes—and this is also to be expected among youth—it becomes quite heated. The numbers attending are unpredictable and range from 30 to 200. The older residential universities are generally beaten in this respect by the provincial.

So much for what has been or is being accomplished. But what of the future? If this type of co-operative activity is to have any enduring effect it must create within the university some permanent machinery. This is not to suggest that there should be yet another society—"of making many societies there is no end"—but it is hoped that there will grow up a tradition of liaison between those that exist so that the old "isolationism" may finally disappear and a framework of co-operative effort and study be gradually erected. Such a process on the part of those who will exert important influence in the national life would effectively demonstrate how barriers can be surmounted without loss of sincerity and conviction, and a community of interest set up by the mere habit of thinking and working together.

## Chester Story

BY A CESTRIAN

"Common Ground" offers its congratulations to the Chester Council of Christians and Jews on the completion of ten years' unbroken activity. The story of the Chester Council, as told below, has been compiled from the notes of one of its foundation members.

LIKE many other good things, the Chester Council of Christians and Jews owes its start to several unrelated factors brought together by what we commonly call, or miscall, chance. Among these factors were the growing knowledge in this country of Nazi antisemitism; the fact that there were often a few Jewish boys at school: seldom more than two or three at a time, but most of them able boys and valuable members of the school; and an American weekly paper called "Christian Century" which some unknown friend sent me, and from which I learned that there were Councils of Christians and Jews in several American towns.

At that early stage I did not know of the existence of a Council of Christians and Jews in this country, but it did occur to me that there should be such a society in Chester, and that I had a few contacts which might be helpful in forming one. My first idea was to begin with a discussion group of senior boys at school. Rather doubtfully, I approached the two Jewish boys in our sixth form. They took my suggestion home—and brought back word that their fathers approved, but wanted to join the group themselves! We started, therefore, as a private society independent of the school, meeting in the house of one of the said fathers, whose hospitality has continued to this day.

One of the boys was our first secretary. Other members of Chester's always small Jewish community were soon brought into our group, notably Mr. J. Berens, who became, and remains, our Joint Chairman, and Rabbi Leslie Edgar (now Minister of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue, St. John's Wood), then stationed in the neighbourhood for a short time, whose delightful personality gave us all confidence, and who helped us to start with some standard of scholarship.

The Christian side of the Council (we started with about six Jews and six Christians) was easier to recruit, in that we had more people to choose from. It was, however, clearly important that from the start we represented varied denominations, and we were also fortunate in that our members came from a wide variety of trades and professions.

As early as July 1942 we had established contact with the national Council of Christians and Jews, and a letter from the Rev. W. W. Simpson was most helpful to us. Whilst we have remained essentially a private society, we have on occasions co-operated with other bodies. Together with the war-time Chester Christian Action Group and the local branch of the Roman Catholic Sword of the Spirit, we made an agreed public statement on religious education. At about the same time a joint meeting with the Christian Action Group was held in the beautiful Cathedral Library.

Our main purposes have remained as they were at the beginning: to keep a careful watch for signs of any local antisemitism, and to learn about and from one another. The first aim, mercifully, has occupied us but little. The second has given us plenty to do, and it shows no sign of completion; but it has been abundantly rewarding. Indeed I would hazard the opinion that the thought, if not the word, has sometimes been in our minds: "Where two sit together and are occupied with the words of the Torah, there is *shekinah* among them." Or "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them."

## Dr. Richard Downey

IT is said of Dr. Richard Downey, the former Roman Catholic Archbishop of Liverpool, whose recent death has been so widely lamented, that he was once explaining to some friends that he had been introduced to Sir Edwin Lutyens, the architect of the new Roman Catholic Cathedral in Liverpool, who was an Anglican, by a mutual friend who was a Jew. "And that," commented Dr. Downey, "is as it should be."

That comment, simple as it was, is in some sense the measure of Dr. Downey's greatness. Devoted though he was in the fullest sense of the word to the life and interests of the Church which he served for so many years with such distinction, he was always ready and willing to co-operate with members of other communities in matters of common interest and concern. Jews in particular have occasion to be grateful, not only for the visits he paid to many of the Jewish Societies in Liverpool, but especially for the fact that it was Dr. Downey himself who suggested the holding of what proved to be the first civic meeting of protest to be held in this country against the Nazi persecution of the Jews in 1933. Their gratitude was voiced by the Chief Rabbi himself in a telegram which he sent to Cardinal Hinsley immediately on learning of Archbishop Downey's death.

That others besides Jews will long remember him with gratitude is evident from the tributes paid by Anglicans and Free Churchmen as well as by the leaders of the civic and educational life of what was in fact almost, and by adoption entirely, his native city! His life and work bear eloquent testimony to the fact that loyalty to one's own in no sense implies an intolerant attitude towards the beliefs of other people, and that integrity of character will command respect wherever it occurs. By such as he are laid the foundations of that true tolerance among men and communities upon which we may hope to build a society free from the bigotries and rivalries with which we are still so sorely afflicted.



## **Commentary**

### **L'affaire Finaly**

On Friday, June 26th, Robert and Gerald Finaly returned from what they themselves are reported to have described as their "holidays in Spain." They were brought back to France by Mlle Ribi  re, a Roman Catholic welfare worker, who, at the instigation of Cardinal Gerlier, Archbishop of Lyons, had been active since the time of their abduction in February in attempting to trace them and arranging for their return to France. They were returned to the home of M. Andr   Weil, a distinguished member of the French Jewish community who has for many years been actively associated with refugee organisations, and who is a close friend of P  re Chaillet, a pioneer in Christian work on behalf of refugee children, who has been closely associated with Cardinal Gerlier and Mlle Ribi  re in bringing about the return of the boys.

Their return was in accordance with an agreement arrived at early in March between Cardinal Gerlier and Mme Rosner (one of the aunts of the boys) and with the moral support and approval of the Chief Rabbi of Paris. "It is now a question," as Cardinal Gerlier declared in expressing his pleasure at the boys' return, "of pursuing this agreement in mutual harmony in order to safeguard their spiritual interests by respecting all legitimate rights, and by a human understanding of the present situation. I know that the Israeli authorities are as intent upon this as we ourselves. I am confident that, far from fostering the divisions between our countries and our religious communities, this heartrending affair will help to bring men of goodwill and faith closer together."

The Court of Cassation, the Supreme Court of Appeal, having given its judgment in Mme Rossner's favour, she has now assumed custody of the boys, and they have gone with her to her home in Israel. At the same time Mme Rossner has withdrawn all legal actions, whether against priests or lay persons, in connection with the abduction of the children and their removal to Spain.

Those who have been most intimately involved in what Cardinal Gerlier has described as "this heartrending affair" should now be left to enjoy in peace a period of quiet adjustment to new situations. In the meantime those who have watched and wondered may do well to reflect on certain more public aspects of the affair. An earlier comment in *Common Ground* suggested that what had already become a *cause c  l  bre* in France might well have repercussions elsewhere in the field of Jewish-Christian relations. Concern for this aspect of the situation no less than for the welfare of the boys themselves led the Council's Executive Com-

mittee, with the approval of the Joint Presidents, to send its Secretary to Paris for consultation with leading representatives of the religious communities in France.

In the course of these consultations he found much to confirm the anxiety which had prompted his visit. The publicity which had attended the affair since the disappearance of the boys in February had done much to heighten tension between many different sections of the French people. There was evidence of similar tendencies in this country also. The return of the boys came, therefore, at what might well be described as the psychological moment, and it is to be hoped that the potentially unhappy consequences of this particular affair in the field of public relations may thereby be averted.

But since, as several Jewish writers and commentators have pointed out, there are still further problems concerning the future of Jewish war-orphans awaiting solution, it is worth recalling that the International Conference of Christians and Jews held at Oxford in 1946 produced a statement on this very issue in terms acceptable to Roman Catholic as well as to other Christians and to Jews also. "It is understood," the

Conference declared, "that freedom to teach and educate includes, in particular, freedom of parents to have their children brought up in their own faith.

"The interests of parents in the religious education of their children, the interests of the children being paramount, may have to be taken up, on the children's behalf, by the religious community with which the parents are (or were) associated. Displaced or orphaned children should normally be restored to the community to which they originally belonged and which claims them, unless, being of mature age, they have made their own free choice of religion; but varying conditions affecting the welfare of such children make it difficult to frame a rule applicable to every single case."

Obvious difficulties arise when the interpretation of such phrases as "being of mature age" and "varying conditions affecting welfare" is called into question. In the present case, for example, while Mlle Brun's action in having the boys baptised as and when she did is regarded by the great majority of Roman Catholics as indefensible, its implications cannot be ignored either in terms of a sacramental theology or of the subsequent educational processes. The baptism in fact took place seven years ago, and there are many who would regard the present age of the boys, namely 12 and 10, as one by which a young person may well have entered into a genuine religious experience and come to hold a faith in all sincerity.

Apart from the welfare of the boys themselves, however, the affair has given rise to a whole range of difficult and delicate problems in the field both of individual and community relations. That Mlle Brun and her supporters acted not merely unwisely but illegally is no longer in dispute. Decisions of the Court have made that clear. But neither is it in dispute that but for Mlle Brun's courage and generosity in the first place the boys might not have survived at all. In such circumstances the development of strong personal attachments is hardly surprising. Moreover, well-intentioned people may sometimes do wrong things for what, in all conscience, they believe to be justifiable ends. This is not to say that mistakes cease to be mistakes, or that infringements of the law can ever be other than what the law declares them to be. Christians and Jews, however, are under obligation not to judge or to condemn their neighbours but to love them, and from that obligation there is no escape.

Perhaps the most sinister feature of this affair has been the way in which almost overnight it was transformed from being a situation affecting the relations between a relatively small group of individuals into one which threatened the inner composure of a whole nation. In this respect it constitutes yet another warning against the dangerous tendency to condemn whole communities on account of the shortcomings of certain of their members. "It would be as unjust," declared the *Jewish Chronicle* in a final comment on the matter, "to condemn all Catholics for the Finaly affair as it would for them to condemn all Jews for the misdeeds of the few."

Proper attention to these and other related aspects of this whole tangled problem is perhaps the most effective contribution we can make to the implementation of Cardinal Gerlier's hope, which will be shared on all sides, that this unhappy affair may indeed help to bring closer together all men of faith and goodwill.

### ● A voice crying . . .

. . . but not, we hope, in the wilderness ! On July 2nd last *The Times* published a letter on Human Rights over the signature of Dr. Leon Zeitlin. Dr. Zeitlin, who had a distinguished political and legal career in pre-Hitler Germany, came to this country during the early years of the Nazi régime. Here, as an adviser on economic affairs and a contributor to a number of leading papers and periodicals, he has sought at all times, often in the face of great difficulty and discouragement, to emphasise the need for constructive work in the field of human relations as over against what he himself has referred to as "the abundance of praiseworthy, though unrealistic, words."

This most recent of his several letters to *The Times* is an outstanding example of the depth of his concern, the soundness of his diagnosis of some of the major ills of our time, and the practical nature of his thinking about them. Starting from the fact that the Human Rights Commission has concluded its most recent session in Geneva "without finishing its chief task, the completion of the draft covenants on human rights and the measures to implement them," Dr. Zeitlin goes on to emphasise the fact which we ourselves have stressed from time to time in these pages that "a merely legal—or political—approach to the basically ethical problems of human rights will not get us very far."

The advancement of human rights, he insists, "is a matter for education rather than politics." His appeal, therefore, is to educators to consider "whether it might be worth while to make comprehensive lectures on the wide range of human rights problems the subject of obligatory courses for all students, irrespective of the vocation they are going to choose."

Though the use of the term "obligatory" in this of all contexts is perhaps rather paradoxical, the question itself is inescapable. There are, no doubt, all sorts of practical difficulties to discourage educators from giving an immediately enthusiastic and affirmative answer. They cannot, however, absolve us from the obligation of facing Dr. Zeitlin's searching challenge. Voluntary organisations may have some contribution to make. Education along these lines is a permanent item on the agenda of the Council of Christians and Jews. But it is ultimately to those who are responsible for education in our universities and colleges especially that Dr. Zeitlin appeals for further thinking and indeed for action in relation to these matters. We can only hope that the appeal will not go unheeded.

### ● American incident

The recent appearance in *The American Mercury* of an article by one of Senator McCarthy's lieutenants (written before he assumed that role and published just before he relinquished it) alleging that "the largest single group supporting the Communist apparatus in the U.S. today is composed of Protestant clergymen" produced, as its author no doubt expected that it would, a nation-wide storm of protest. We are glad to publish the text of a telegram addressed to the President of the U.S.A. by our American opposite number, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, together with the text of Mr. Eisenhower's reply.

The N.C.C.J. telegram, which was sent over the names of three clergymen, a Protestant, a Roman Catholic and a Jew, read as follows:

"The sweeping attack on the loyalty of Protestant clergymen and the charge that they are the largest single group supporting the Communist apparatus is unjustified and deplorable. This is a matter of vital concern to the nation. You are to be congratulated on your recent warning against casting doubt on the loyalty of the churches and synagogues. We fully recognise the right of Congress to investigate the loyalty of any citizen regardless of the office he may occupy, ecclesiastical or otherwise. But destroying trust in the leaders of Protestantism, Catholicism or Judaism by wholesale condemnation is to weaken the great American bulwark against atheistic materialism and communism."

The President's reply, addressed to the three clergymen, said:

"I have today received your telegram of today's date. I want you to know at once that I fully share the convictions you state. The issues here are clear. Generalised and irresponsible attacks that sweepingly condemn the whole of any group of citizens are alien to America. Such attacks betray contempt for the principles of freedom and decency and when these attacks, whatever their professed purpose be, condemn such a vast portion of the churches or clergy as to create doubt in the loyalty of all, the damage to our nation is multiplied.

If there be found any American among us, whatever his calling, guilty of treasonous action against the State, let him be legally and properly convicted and punished. This applies to any person, lay or clergy.

The churches of America are citadels of our faith in individual freedom and human dignity. This faith is the living source of all our spiritual strength and this strength is our matchless armour in our worldwide struggle against the forces of Godless tyranny and oppression.

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER."

Comment, beyond expressing appreciation of the promptness of the action taken by the N.C.C.J. and of its efficacy, is hardly necessary!

#### CHRISTIANS AND JEWS

*The development of understanding since 1941*

By WILLIAM W. SIMPSON

1s. 2d. post free from the Council of Christians and Jews

## About Ourselves

- Harriet Cohen, C.B.E., the distinguished pianist, gave a series of four pianoforte recitals on behalf of the Council of Christians and Jews in July. The first was in Chester Cathedral, on the evening of Monday, July 13th, and was followed on successive evenings by recitals in Leeds Parish Church, Liverpool Parish Church, and Manchester Cathedral.



Miss Cohen played under great difficulty and strain, as she was suffering from arthritis which seriously affected her right hand; nevertheless, she was determined not to disappoint the large audiences that had gathered to hear her, and few could have detected any fault in her skilful performance.

A carefully chosen programme fell into three parts—early English keyboard music by William Byrd, Orlando Gibbons, Purcell and Arne, linked by a Bach Fantasia to music of our own day by Vaughan Williams and Bloch (the latter's *Visions and Prophesies* being, as Miss Cohen explained, perhaps the most characteristically Jewish music that we have); and finally, some short pieces by Chopin and Liszt.

The appreciation of the audiences for Miss Cohen's delightful playing seemed to find its full expression despite the customary absence of applause in Churches and Cathedrals. In the course of each recital an opportunity was taken of commanding the cause which Miss

Cohen was serving by her art, and many must have thought how appropriate it was that a Jewish artist, by the exercise of the gifts which God has bestowed on her, should help in the furtherance of better human understanding by playing in Christian Churches.

After each recital, an informal reception was held in Miss Cohen's honour. An added mark of distinction was that the recitals were given under the Patronage of the Lords Lieutenant of Cheshire, Lancashire, and the West Riding of Yorkshire.

The four days will long be remembered by all who are associated with the Council of Christians and Jews in the cities where the recitals were given. We are confident that they will greatly have helped our cause in those places. We are most grateful to Miss Cohen for her splendid service; to those who so readily agreed to the recitals being held in the Cathedrals and Churches under their care; and to all those who by their advice and practical service made the occasions the outstanding success that they were.

- The second conference on "A Textbook Survey" was held at the Royal Empire Society on May 16th and 17th. It was attended by some 40-50 educationalists from all parts of the country including one or two leading anthropologists. Its object was to con-

sider a report on the recent survey of history textbooks carried out by the Council in order to discover whether they accorded fair and adequate treatment to the different human groups within the nation or whether, on the contrary, they tended to promote

intolerant attitudes and perpetuate misconceptions. The Chairman was Professor Lauwers, Professor of Comparative Education in the University of London. At the opening of the conference he asked members to stand in memory of G. T. Hankin who had been Chairman of the Steering Committee appointed to carry out the survey and had given unfailing service in the cause of improving history textbooks.

Discussion on the different aspects of the problem was led by a number of experts. Mr. E. H. Dance, textbook writer and History Master at Wolverhampton Grammar School, treated the problem of objectivity in the writing of history. The subject of religious bias was dealt with from an Anglican standpoint by Miss D. Mather, Senior History Mistress at Loughton High School; from a Roman Catholic by Mr. H. J. Parkinson, Senior History Master at the Cardinal Vaughan School; and from a Jewish by Dr. Walter Isaacson, Senior History Master at Kilburn Grammar School. Dr. Victor Purcell, Lecturer in Far Eastern History at Cambridge University, led the discussion on the treatment of the contribution of non-European peoples. "A publisher's point of view" was expressed by Mr. Olaf Anderson.

Though there was a good deal of disagreement on certain aspects of the problem, the conference were unanimous in their feeling that many textbooks failed from the point of view of promoting human understanding. They therefore made a number of practical proposals which included the publication of the report, the holding of a survey on similar lines of the history books used in primary schools and an investigation into scripture textbooks. It is hoped that all these tasks will be undertaken by the Council in the near future.

● About 350 boys and girls from secondary modern and grammar schools forgathered at the Conway Hall on Tuesday, May 12th, for a conference on "The Problem of Group Understanding," the first to be held under the joint auspices of the Council for Education in World Citizenship and ourselves. First they were shown two films, *Make Way for Youth* and *Brotherhood of Man*, which treat this subject at different levels and they were then split up into 16 groups for purposes of discussion.

In the afternoon each group made its report through a selected rapporteur.

Perhaps the star turn of the conference came with a Brains Trust at the end of the day. Those who took part were Mr. Learie Constantine, Rabbi Leslie Edgar, Canon T. J. Fitzgerald, and the Rev. W. W. Simpson. Professor Lauwers displayed his usual competence and urbanity in the Chair. The team did their best to cope with a number of searching questions which included one on antisemitism and one on the colour bar. It was interesting to hear Mr. Constantine state that in his opinion only one country was free from the colour bar—and that was New Zealand.

A valuable by-product of the conference was the tea-time meeting held between the teachers who had brought the respective contingents from the different schools, and representatives of the Council. Fortunately the members of the Brains Trust team also stayed for this and gave us the benefit of their help and advice. As the result of this informal discussion it was decided to hold similar conferences, perhaps for smaller groups of children, during the ensuing school year. Mr. Doyle, of the Cardinal Griffin School, kindly offered to make his school buildings available for the next conference and this offer was gratefully accepted. All present agreed that the function had been a success both from a social and educational point of view.

● An informal discussion was held in June between representatives of the Council of Christians and Jews and the London Society of Jews and Christians, and a number of people concerned directly or indirectly with industry and commerce, to consider the possibilities of work in the industrial field. For some time it has been thought that there might be value in co-operation between Christians and Jews, to strengthen in industrial life and relations the acceptance of the moral and spiritual values which Jews and Christians hold in common, and to win acceptance and practical implementation in industry of the principle of the freedom of the individual conscience, and the rejection of any form of discrimination on grounds of race, religion or colour.

The meeting, to which were invited both those holding responsible positions

in industry and others active in industrial welfare work, was convened to advise whether there were any aspects of these problems not already being tackled which might be approached on a co-operative basis by Christians and Jews, and whether, where such work is already going forward on sectional or denominational lines, there would be advantage in a closer association between these separate efforts.

A useful discussion led to general agreement that, while no new organisation was needed, there would be value in occasional *ad hoc* conferences to deal with particular problems that might arise from time to time, and that there would be value also in an exchange of information and knowledge about the work done by the various bodies already active in this field. It was hoped that the bodies sponsoring this meeting might be helpful in these directions, and also in other ways such as initiating serious research into the causes, extent and effects of religious and racial prejudice and discrimination in industry.

As time goes on, more will be heard of this new responsibility, which the Council of Christians and Jews shares with the London Society of Jews and Christians.

● There have been a number of changes among the officers of our local Councils of Christians and Jews during recent weeks. The announcement of the nomination of the Rt. Rev. Bishop Wilson, the Dean of Manchester, to be Bishop of Birmingham, and of the Vicar of Leeds, Canon A. S. Reeve, to be Bishop of Lichfield, deprives our Manchester and Leeds branches respectively of their Chairmen. Both Bishop Wilson and the Vicar of Leeds have given wise and energetic leadership,

and are held in the highest esteem by their Jewish and Christian colleagues. *Common Ground* extends to both its congratulations, and sincere good wishes as they enter their new sphere of service.

We record with much pleasure that the Bishop of Middleton, the Rt. Rev. Frank Woods, has agreed to succeed Bishop Wilson as Chairman of the Manchester Council of Christians and Jews.

The Leeds Council has also lost its Secretary, Father Peter Mayhew, who has answered a call to join a Bush Brotherhood in Australia, and left England at the beginning of July. He gave many years of energetic service to our Leeds branch, and to him also we extend our greetings and good wishes. We are glad to know that the Rev. J. W. Cooke, Vicar of Moor Allerton, has agreed to take over the Secretariate of our Leeds Council. We welcome him, and assure him that he will be well supported in his task by our many friends in the West Riding. We are also glad to hear that Mr. Louis Saipe, who has long been an active worker in Leeds, will maintain the splendid service of "Trio Teams" of speakers which has been built up there in recent years.

Another northern branch to lose one of its officers is Liverpool, where the Rev. Gordon S. Robinson will have to relinquish the Secretariate of the Liverpool Council of Christians and Jews when he leaves in August to go to a country parish in Somerset. We record our gratitude for many years of splendid service in undertaking a very considerable programme of activities for our Liverpool Council.

One further change affects the Hampstead Council, where Major W. H. Close has been elected Deputy-Chairman, a new office for this branch.

## Book Notes

### History Text-books and International Understanding

By J. A. Lauwerys  
(UNESCO, 3s. Od.)

This pamphlet is characterised throughout with a sanity of judgment and a humane outlook which from long

experience we have come to associate with its author. He does not make any extravagant claim for the history textbook that by itself it can produce any revolution in social attitudes but he does think that the young might become better men and better citizens through learning history in the right way.

To this end he considers a number of practical suggestions which formed the basis of discussion at an international seminar organised by UNESCO at Brussels in 1950. These assume that nearly all authors "held opinions they are not aware of holding . . . and are biased and prejudiced without knowing it." They aim at removing the traditional misconceptions and "stereotypes" that vitiate so much teaching about "the other group," as well as the double standard of morality which creeps in when the author's nation is compared with any other.

The writer has much of interest to say about the origin and development of the history text-book, teaching methods suitable to the different age-levels, the concept of historical time, and the use and abuse of atlases and other visual aids. All this is subsidiary to his main contention "that this is no time for maintaining ancient hatreds which cloud the understanding and befog the judgment." It is rather the time for making the citizens of the future aware of the common problems confronting every group of the human family alike.

### Right and Wrong

By Martin Buber

(SCM Press, 6s. 0d.)

Anything from the pen of Martin Buber is important and worth reading, and this little book is no exception. It is a discussion of five psalms, "all of which treat of the relation between right doing and wrong doing, between the rightdoers and the wrongdoers on earth, and so of the world struggle between good and evil."

Buber accepts the stylistic differences seen in these psalms as sufficient evidence to prove different authorship, but he claims that the underlying unity of attitude and outlook makes it possible to speak of a single figure, who can be denoted "the Psalmist." He goes further and suggests that these five psalms, when "set in the right sequence," complete one another "like the stages of a personal way—a way leading through moving and transforming experiences to one great insight." He describes his interpretation of these psalms as "an essay in existential exegesis."

It can never be said that Buber is easy reading. Indeed Buber would repudiate any such suggestion as being far from his purpose and method. But Buber is always stimulating, and this volume, ably translated from the German by Ronald Gregor Smith, is a valuable addition to the now quite extensive Buber literature in English.

### The Teacher Was Black

By H. E. O. James and Cora Tenen

(Heinemann, 10s. 6d.)

This book describes an interesting sociological experiment which was recently carried out at a Secondary Modern School. The object was to discover whether mental attitudes towards foreign groups were affected by personal contacts. It was arranged that two West African teachers should spend a fortnight teaching at the school and that the general attitude of the boys and girls towards negroes should be tested both before and after their visit.

It is not too much to claim that the effect of this contact on the children's minds was electric.. Not only were their former prejudices against negroes largely removed but they began to think more favourably of other coloured groups as well, such as the Indians and Chinese. And it was discovered through subsequent interviews that this new and more friendly attitude had come to stay.

What are the educational implications of this experiment ? There are some salutary warnings in the last chapter of this admirable survey against any expectations it may arouse of the possibility of applying this new kind of method on a wide scale. But if, from the nature of things, personal contacts with members of foreign groups cannot be established in many of our schools, at least there could be "more teaching and more effective teaching about other peoples" and differences could be presented "against a background of conviction that fundamentally they and we share a common humanity."

### Race and Society

By Kenneth Little

(UNESCO, 1s. 6d.)

This is the eighth of a series of pamphlets dealing with a subject of quite transcending importance at the present time—"the race question in modern

science." As Dr. Little sees it, this has only become an acute problem in comparatively modern times. Where discrimination or persecution occurred in the ancient world it was due to other than racial aversions such as the cultural or the religious. "What changed this easy-going attitude to men of different race was the development of capitalism and the profit motive as a characteristic feature of western civilisation."

Dr. Little illustrates this thesis through a survey of racial attitudes in certain specific countries, South Africa, Brazil, Hawaii and finally the United Kingdom. He shows how the treatment of coloured people by white, far from being uniform, has varied substantially in each case with results which are profoundly affecting the local political and social pattern. And this is largely the outcome of differences in the economic motivation of the dominant racial groups.

This analysis, effected with both knowledge and skill, leads the author to a refreshingly hopeful conclusion. There is nothing permanent, he thinks, about the race problem. The psychological factor will be modified if men work on bravely to improve economic conditions and liberalise racial attitudes through the medium of education. Indeed, we can look forward to a time when "it may seem unbelievable to future generations that a slight difference in the chemical composition of their skins should have caused men to hate, despise, revile and persecute one another."

### Addresses given at the Ninth Conference of Anglo-Jewish Preachers

A series of more than usually interesting and important addresses, delivered at the ninth conference of Anglo-Jewish ministers held in 1951, was published some little time ago by the Standing Committee of that Conference. It includes a brief but profound analysis of the modern concept of faith by Dr. A. Altmann; a statement by the Chief Rabbi of the Jewish communities in Ireland on problems of Jewish family life, which includes a discussion of such matters as the Jewish attitude to birth-control and artificial insemination; a

paper by the Rev. C. Pearl on the responsibilities of the minister in relation to the questionings of youth; and a résumé of a very frank and searching address by the Chief Rabbi.

Reports of conferences do not as a rule make exciting reading or find a place among books felt to be of more permanent value. It would be a pity, however, if these addresses were to be lost or forgotten simply because they appear in what is little more than pamphlet form, for they contain much that is of value to the Christian no less than to the Jewish reader.

*In the May-June issue of "Common Ground," the book "Science and Religion" (published by Cambridge University Press, 21s. Od.) was inadvertently attributed to Mr. E. Sutherland Bates.*

*The author of "Science and Religion: The first series of the 1951 Gifford Lectures: Natural Religion and Christian Theology" is the Rev. Canon C. E. Raven, and Mr. E. Sutherland Bates is the author of "Life of the Bible," published by Andre Deutsch, 8s. 6d*

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